



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

An Advisor Becomes a Leader

Inter-Ministerial Commission for Energy advisor advances power sector cooperation



Photo: USAID/AIRP

With Washington, D.C. in the background, Mirwais Attaulhaq (left) is congratulated by a representative of the International Leadership Program on U.S. Foreign Policy and Energy.

To bring together the various ministries and organizations involved, the electric power sector, USAID, and the Afghan Government created the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Energy, ensuring an Afghan-led effort to provide power throughout the country.

When he is not participating in international workshops or briefing Afghan ministers, Mirwais Attaulhaq advises USAID and the multiple donor agencies that help to provide electrical power throughout Afghanistan.

Attaulhaq is the advisor to the Secretariat of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Energy, known as ICE. Funded by USAID's Afghanistan Infrastructure and Rehabilitation Program, ICE coordinates donor support for energy infrastructure development as well as energy policy and best practices that maximize the country's energy resources. ICE also supports the commercialization of energy so that Afghanistan can pay for the energy that it needs.

When he began, Attaulhaq was deputy to the expatriate manager who guided the Secretariat. After an apprenticeship of three and a half years, Attaulhaq is now the manager, and the deputy is his former boss. "One of the purposes of the advisor to the Secretariat is to help develop Afghan leadership, and Mirwais is an example of that," said the former manager.

In his role, Attaulhaq conducts ICE's monthly meeting, publishes energy-sector reports, and shuttles among the organizations to follow up on initiatives. During Attaulhaq's tenure, ICE has become respected as a model of interagency cooperation and progress.

In the summer of 2010, Attaulhaq was invited to participate in the International Leadership Program in the United States to learn about foreign policy and energy security. While there, he visited several cities that are exploring ways to conserve energy and use alternative sources. "In the United States, electricity is standardized," he said. "Here we are just beginning."

Though he acknowledges that Afghanistan has many challenges in the energy field, Attaulhaq has reason for optimism. Afghanistan's capacity to provide power to its citizens is increasing every day and educated Afghan advisors ensure that progress continues. USAID knows that Afghan leaders like Attaulhaq and commissions like ICE make all the difference in the future of Afghanistan's energy efforts.